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<p>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</p> <p>Saliena Dowd—Chairman; Ronnie Reagan —Vice Chairman; Charles Beshler—Treasurer John F. Johnson, Jr.—Member; Donna Aufdenberg—Secretary</p>		

Cost-Share Available

The Bollinger County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) has cost-share available for the following practices and recommends spring evaluations:

- **Well Decommissioning** - Incentive for permanently closing water wells no longer in use.
- **Use Exclusion** - Fencing existing woodland areas susceptible to excessive erosion due to livestock grazing.
- **Timber Harvest Plans** - Incentive payment for landowners that follow proper design and implementation of management practices on logging roads, stream crossings, log landings and other measures during a timber harvest where landowner is planning a timber sale.

For future planning, there will be cost-share available for the following practices that should be evaluated in the summer due to planning and completion deadlines:

- **Spring Development** - Protecting and enhancing water quality through proper collection and distribution of ground water sources. Cost-share for pipe & trenching, tank, exclusion fence and critical area seeding.
- **Restoration of Skid Trails, Logging Roads** - Treatment of active gulley erosion on existing skid trails, logging roads, stream crossings and log landings that have been improperly constructed during a timber harvest.
- **Critical Area Treatments** - Assistance for shaping and seeding down critical areas (such as gulleys, banks, roadsides, field borders, and similar problem areas) on farms which are susceptible to erosion.
- **Cover Crop** - Incentive paid to Operators for applying cover crops on cropland acres where row crops are grown and soil erosion needs to be prevented or water quality and soil health improved. Cover Crops need to be no-tilled or broadcast seeded and production crop following cover crops must be planted using a no-till system. Cover crops will not be harvested. Those interested in cover crops should inquire in the summer for planning.

All practices have qualifying factors that determine eligibility for cost-share assistance. If you would like more information concerning our programs, please call 573/238-2671 ext. 3.

CONSERVING SOIL & WATER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

BEFORE THE PARKS, SOILS AND WATER SALES TAX

- In the 1930s, Americans realized how devastating soil erosion could be as the Dust Bowl swept across the nation, relocating an estimated 300 million tons of soil. Missouri had the highest rate of erosion in the nation, which led to the creation of the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Districts in 1943.
- In 1982, Missouri was losing soil at a rate of 10.8 tons per acre each year on cultivated cropland.



SOIL EROSION IN MISSOURI

- Due to the efforts of the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation Program, Missouri has saved more than 177 million tons of soil over the past 30 years.
- Of Missouri's 44.6 million acres of land, 14.8 million are considered cropland. With almost half of Missouri's cropland soil classified as highly erodible, controlling and minimizing erosion is a significant challenge for Missouri's farmers.
- Erosion can cause problems by washing away the productive topsoil, which adversely affects local and national food supplies and economies.
- Soil erosion caused by stormwater runoff carries fertilizers away from the fields and into the waterways. The soil entering the waterway can cause water quality problems that continue far downstream.
- Eroded soil settling along the shores and beds of streams, lakes and rivers can lead to the destruction of valuable aquatic habitat such as fish spawning areas.
- Soil and contaminated water entering drinking water supply systems each year can increase water treatment costs, which raises utility bills for Missouri households.
- Revenues from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax have resulted in Missouri having the greatest soil erosion reduction rate of any other state with more than 10 million acres of cultivated cropland.

HOW WE HELP

- The Department of Natural Resources has provided over \$660 million to Missouri agricultural landowners to implement more than 220,000 conservation practices using revenues from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.
- **Grants to Districts:** Each of the 114 soil and water conservation districts in Missouri receive district grants. These grants are used by local districts to fund technical assistance for landowners and provide information and educational programs.
- **Cost-Share Program:** This program shares the cost of implementing conservation practices between the state and landowners. It provides partial reimbursement of the cost for the installation of soil & water conservation practices that prevent or control excessive erosion and improve water quality. These practices include buffers, grazing systems, cover crops and sediment basins.
- **Research and Monitoring:** The program provides funding for research and water quality monitoring. These efforts identify new methods for soil and water conservation practices that produce the best results for preventing erosion and protecting water quality.

About the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax that provides funding for Missouri state parks and historic sites and soil and water conservation efforts. The tax is divided equally between the two efforts.
- The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax was first approved by voters in 1984, and has since been reapproved by voters three times. In 1988, 1996 and 2006, the tax was renewed by more than two-thirds majority of Missouri voters.
- The Soil and Water Conservation Program is funded by the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.
- The portion of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax that supports soil and water conservation averages about \$7 a year per Missourian.
- The Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax is placed on the ballot every 10 years to reaffirm the voter's support of the park system and soil and water conservation efforts. **The Parks, Soils & Water Sales Tax is set to expire if not renewed by voters in 2016.**

Farm Service Agency CRP Sign Up Continues through Feb. 26

A general enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is now through Feb. 26. Participants in CRP establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees to control soil erosion. CRP improves water quality and develops wildlife habitat on marginally productive agricultural lands. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance.

Producers can submit offers for the 49th CRP sign-up at the Bollinger County FSA. Some eligibility requirements include:

- Producer must have owned or operated the land for at least 12 months prior to the end of this CRP enrollment period;
- Land must be cropland (including field margins) that is planted, or considered planted, to an agricultural commodity four of the six crop years from 2008 to 2013; and be physically capable of being planted;

Land that is not currently enrolled in CRP may be offered for enrollment during the general enrollment period. In addition, CRP participants with contracts expiring on Sept. 30, 2016, may submit offers.

Soil rental rates have changed, so contact your local office to see if re-enrollment is right for you.

Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish native plant species on marginal agricultural lands for the primary purpose of preventing soil erosion and improving water quality and related benefits of reducing loss of wildlife habitat.

Enrollment Period for 2016 USDA Safety Net Coverage

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that producers who chose coverage from the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can begin visiting FSA county offices starting Dec. 7, 2015, to sign contracts to enroll in coverage for 2016. The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2016.

Although the choice between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm by signing a contract each year to receive coverage.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local FSA office to schedule an appointment to enroll. If a farm is not enrolled during the 2016 enrollment period, producers on that farm will not be eligible for financial assistance from the ARC or PLC programs should crop prices or farm revenues fall below the historical price or revenue benchmarks established by the program.

The two programs were authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill and offer a safety net to agricultural producers when there is a substantial drop in prices or revenues for covered commodities. Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium grain rice (which includes short grain and sweet rice), safflower seed, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Upland cotton is no longer a covered commodity. For more details regarding these programs, go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

For more information, producers are encouraged to visit the Bollinger County FSA or call 573/238-2671 ext. 2.



POND MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Attention pond owners! Have you ever wanted to know how to improve your pond fishery? How to deal with nuisance aquatic plants? What fish to harvest and what fish to stock? Well here is your chance to learn about these questions and more.

On March 24th the Missouri Department of Conservation will host a pond management workshop at the Cape Girardeau Nature Center in the Cape County Park. The workshop will begin at 6:00pm and end at 9:00pm.

Presentations will be given by MDC Fisheries Management Biologists over various topics which include: site selection, pond construction, watershed management, leaking ponds, fish stocking and management, aquatic vegetation establishment and control, plus much more. Questions are encouraged and this informal discussion will hopefully get you on your way to a successful and enjoyable pond.

This workshop is free; however, pre-registration is required. To pre-register or for more information, contact the Missouri Department of Conservation Nature Center at (573)-290-5218.

Prescribed Fire Workshops

When: Tuesday, February 9, 2016
1:00 - 4:30 p.m. & 6:00—9:30 p.m.

Where: Southeast Regional Conservation Office
2302 County Park Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Presented by: Missouri Department of Conservation



Prescribed fire is a low cost way for landowners to manage woodlands, glades, CRP, grasslands and old fields for forage production and/or improve wildlife habitat.

This workshop will include classroom discussions on methods, equipment, safety, and why and when you would use fire as a management tool. Emphasis will include how to conduct a safe and effective burn to control sprouts, encourage beneficial plants and create better quality quail habitat. Participation will qualify landowners to have a prescribed burn plan prepared for their fields and use available loan equipment.

Attendees will also be invited to optional demonstration burns which will be conducted later in March around the region to demonstrate the use of tools and techniques.

To register for one of the workshops please contact the Missouri Department of Conservation at 573/290-5730 or Cape Girardeau County SWCD at 573/243-1467. Registration required.

CSP Funding Boost Provides More Opportunities for Missouri Farmers in 2016

COLUMBIA, MO, Jan. 28, 2016 – Farmers have until March 31 to apply to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for voluntary assistance offered through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The deadline applies to farmers and ranchers new to the program and to those who signed CSP contracts in 2012 who want to renew those contracts for another five years.

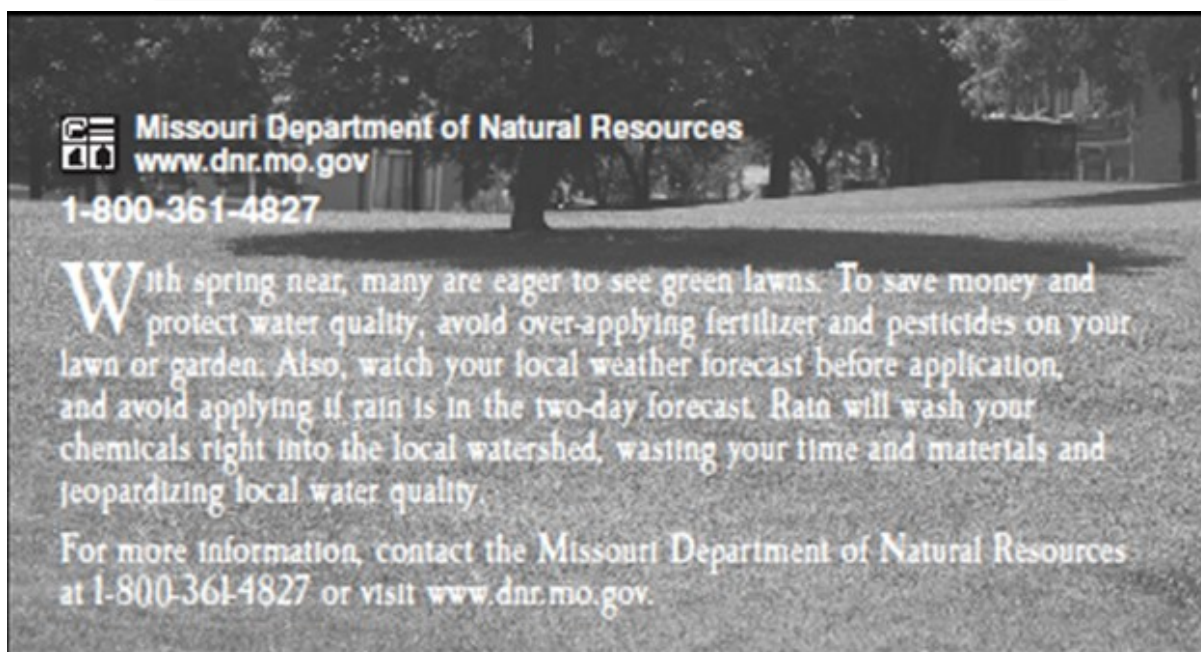
“There is a great opportunity this year for farmers to participate in CSP,” State Conservationist J.R. Flores said. “The 2016 budget approved by Congress allows us to enroll significantly more acres into CSP than we were able to the past several years.”

In addition to allowing NRCS to fund up to 265,000 new acres, Flores said the budget allows the agency to renew all of the 413 CSP contracts that Missouri farmers and ranchers signed in 2012. Those contracts, covering 192,000 acres, will expire on December 31 if not renewed. Farmers may renew the contracts signed in 2012 on a non-competitive basis if they are willing to adopt additional conservation activities, such as improving water quality or soil health.

The 2014 Farm Bill offers farmers and ranchers a wider variety of options through CSP to address natural resource challenges. The full list of options applies to new and renewal applications. New conservation activities include testing the effects of cover crops on soil health, incorporating wildlife-beneficial management, and using innovative irrigation efforts to reduce water use. CSP pays participants for conservation performance — the better the performance, the higher the payment.

CSP applications for 2016 contracts can be submitted at local NRCS offices until March 31. More information about CSP is available on the NRCS website: www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).



A Few Reminders...

- NRCS accepts EQIP sign-ups all year. Ranking is typically in the Fall. Call the office at (573) 238-2671 ext. 3 for more information or to make an appointment to discuss cost-share programs.
- SWCD & NRCS does random spot checks on completed practices still under maintenance agreements. Maintenance life varies from 5 to 10 years depending on the practice.
- Feb 25 - Cattlemen's Annual Banquet 6 p.m., Jackson KC Hall. RSVP by Feb 22 to 243-3581
- Feb 26 - Last day for CRP sign up with FSA
- March 31 - Last day to sign up for the CSP 2016 contracts with NRCS. Call the office at (573) 238-2671 ext. 3 for more information or to make an appointment to discuss any programs.
- Aug. 1st — Last Day for ARC/PLC 2016 FSA Safety Net Coverage enrollment period signups with FSA call (573)238-2671 ext. 2 for more information.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Equipment Rental

The Bollinger County SWCD & Missouri Department of Conservation have the following equipment available for completing your farming practices:

7' No-till Drill—\$10.00/acre
10' No-till Drill—\$10.00/acre
Pasture Renovator—\$6.00/acre
Root Plow—\$10.00/day
Wildlife Food Plot (1 row) Planter
Burn Spray Trailer